



Monday of the 5th Week of Easter



Date: Monday, May 19, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 14:5–18

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 115:1–4, 15–16 | **Response:** Psalm 115:1ab

Gospel Acclamation: John 14:26

Gospel Reading: John 14:21–26

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

Have you ever had that moment when you're absolutely sure you're going the right way—until you're not? Maybe you're driving, following the signs, even feeling confident—and then suddenly, you realize you're lost. It's jarring. And it's humbling.

That's exactly the kind of moment Paul and Barnabas face in Lystra. They perform a miracle. A man, crippled from birth, is healed. The crowd watches in awe—then jumps to the wrong conclusion. They think Paul and Barnabas are gods. It's not persecution this time—it's praise. And that, in its own way, is more dangerous.

They tear their garments. No! they cry, We are human, just like you! Turn to the living God! They echo the ancient cry of Israel in the wilderness, when the people made a golden calf and worshipped it, forgetting the God who brought them out of Egypt. They echo the prophets who called Israel back to the God who dwelt among them—in the tent, in the Ark, in the Temple, symbols of God's presence among His people. And now, Paul and Barnabas speak of a new dwelling place.

This brings us to the Gospel. Judas—not Iscariot, not the one who betrayed Jesus, but another disciple—asks a sincere question: Lord, why do you reveal yourself to us and not to the world?

And Jesus gives an answer almost too wonderful to believe: Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our dwelling with them.

This is the heart of the Easter message. The Risen Lord is not just alive—he is present. The God who once dwelt in the Temple now dwells in us. This is not poetry or metaphor. This is Christian identity. Through the Resurrection, you and I become living temples.

But let's be honest: we often give space in our hearts to other gods.

In Zambia today, what do we worship? Corruption dressed up as cleverness. Tribalism disguised as loyalty. Dependency masked as aid. We look to political leaders as saviours. We chase foreign investment without demanding justice. Like the people of Lystra, we can mistake noise for truth and power for glory.

And yet God still offers to dwell among us—not in buildings or systems, but in people who live with integrity, compassion, and courage. That is where the Spirit, the Advocate, is found: in those who forgive, who speak truth, who serve without seeking reward.

How, then, do we become such people?

Let's take St. Ignatius's advice. Imagine yourself in the Upper Room. You can see the flickering oil lamp. You can hear the hush. Jesus looks at you—yes, you—and says, My Father and I will make our home with you. How would you live if you believed that?

This Easter season is not only a celebration of life after death, but a summons to life before death: a life lived fully in accordance with Christ's teachings, marked by love, service, and a commitment to justice, all empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is a summons to life lived in the presence of God.

And for us in Zambia, that life is communal. Ubuntu teaches us: I am because we are. If God dwells in me, then he must also dwell in us. That means confronting injustice. Reconciling with those we've written off. Building communities where truth is spoken, the poor are heard, and love is not just preached but practiced.

So I leave you with three questions to pray with this week:

- What worldly success or security am I tempted to worship, as the people of Lystra did?
- How can I create space in my heart—and in my home—for Christ to dwell?

- What concrete act can I do this week to make God’s presence visible in my community?

Let us not be mistaken for gods. Let us be recognised as temples—living, breathing, Spirit-filled. And may we, with humility and courage, proclaim by our lives: Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.

Let us pray:

Risen Lord, dwell within us. Strip us of the false gods we cling to, and open our hearts to your living Word. Teach us to live as your dwelling places—in truth, in justice, and in love. May Zambia, and each of our communities, become a place where your glory is seen not in gold or power, but in humble service and courageous hope. Amen.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.